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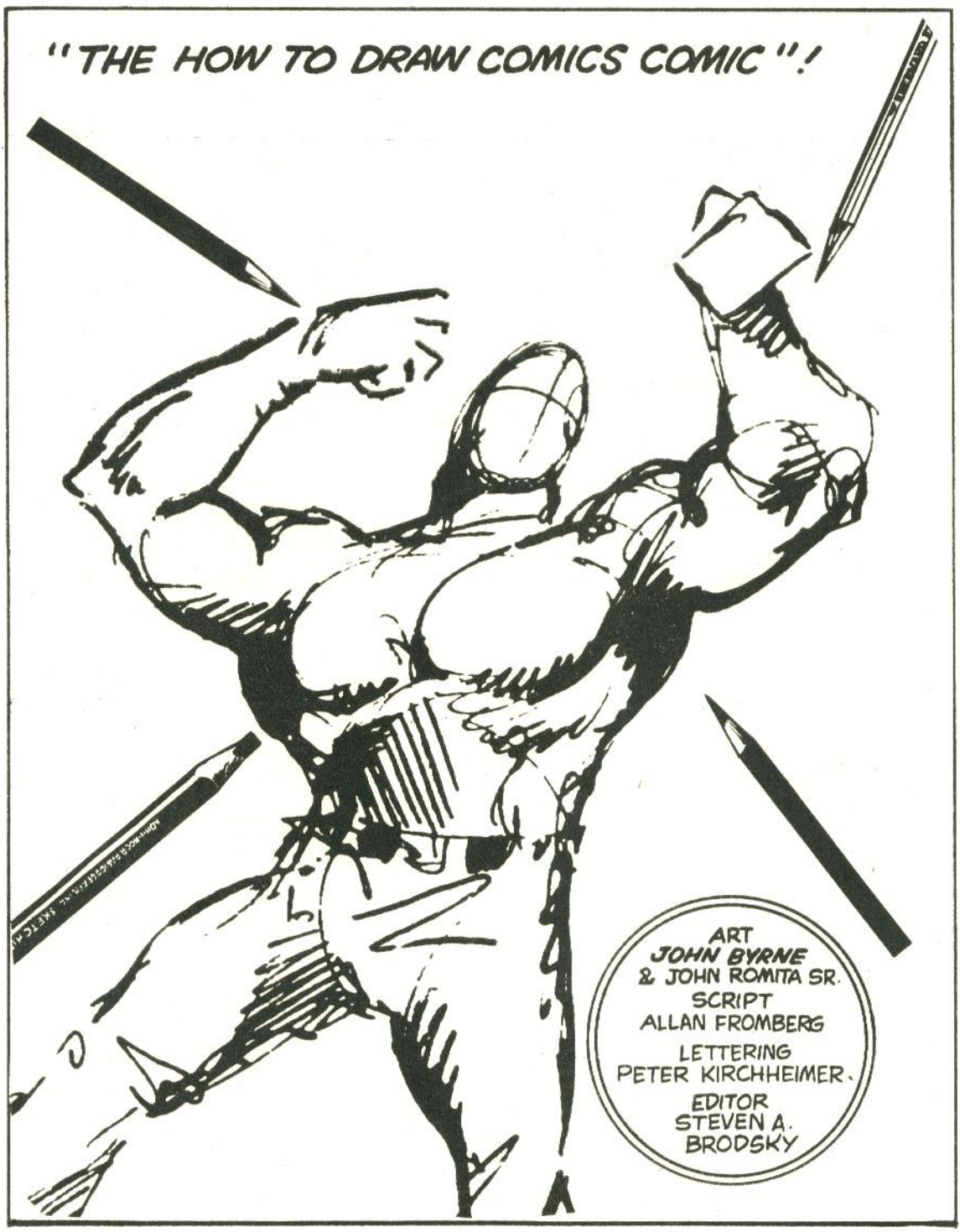
How To Draw COMICS COMIC™

John Byrne ©1985

"THE HOW TO DRAW COMICS COMIC"!



ART
JOHN BYRNE
& JOHN ROMITA SR.
SCRIPT
ALLAN FROMBERG
LETTERING
PETER KIRCHHEIMER
EDITOR
STEVEN A.
BRODSKY

The How To Draw Comics Comic, Number 1, 1985 is published by Solson Publications; Gary Brodsky, President; Peter Brody, Publisher; Gayle Finkelman, Vice-President; Publishing; Carole Farnum, Production Manager. Office of Publication:Solson Publications, P.O. Box 274, Brooklyn, New York 11235. Published quarterly. Copyright© 1985 by Solson Publications. All rights reserved.
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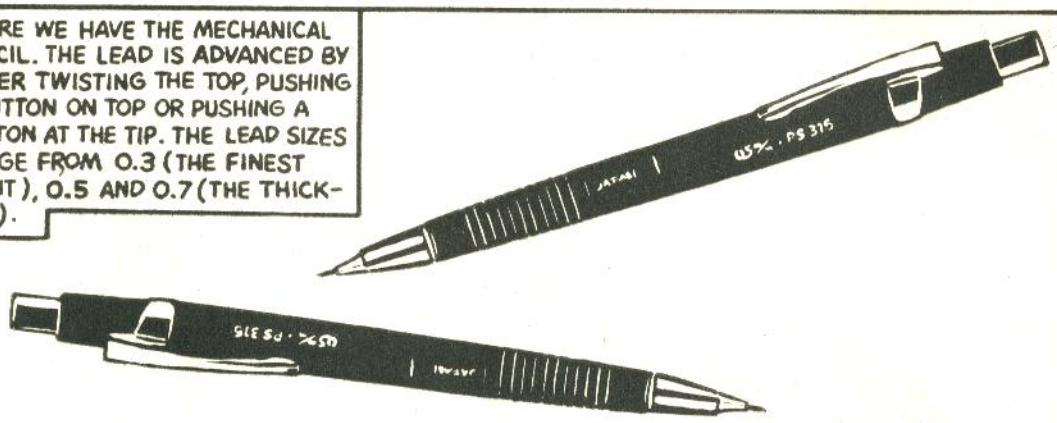
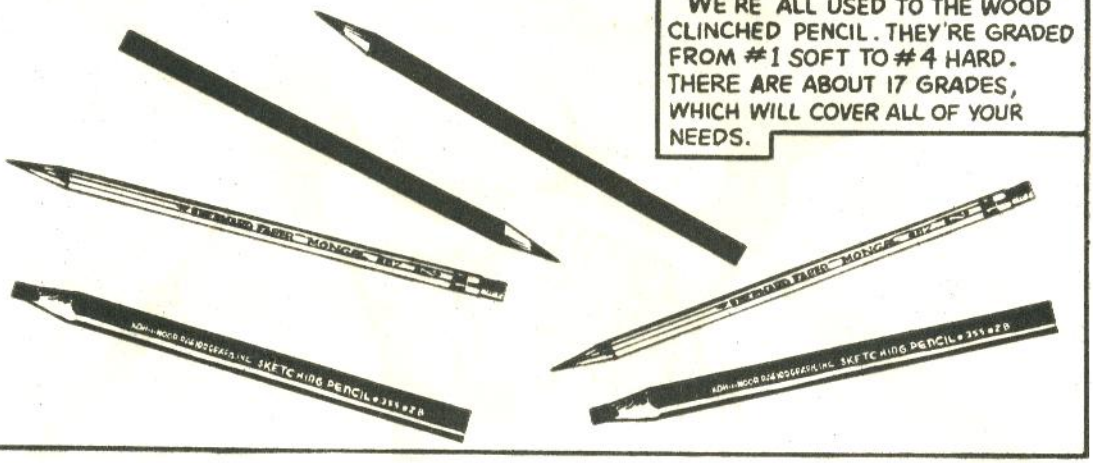
CHAPTER 1: "THE RIGHT TOOLS, HOW TO CHOOSE 'EM, HOW TO USE 'EM"

WELCOME ABOARD! YOU'VE JUST TAKEN THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS BECOMING A SUCCESSFUL COMIC ARTIST. IN ORDER TO BUILD ON A STRONG FOUNDATION, YOU MUST FIRST LEARN THE BASICS.

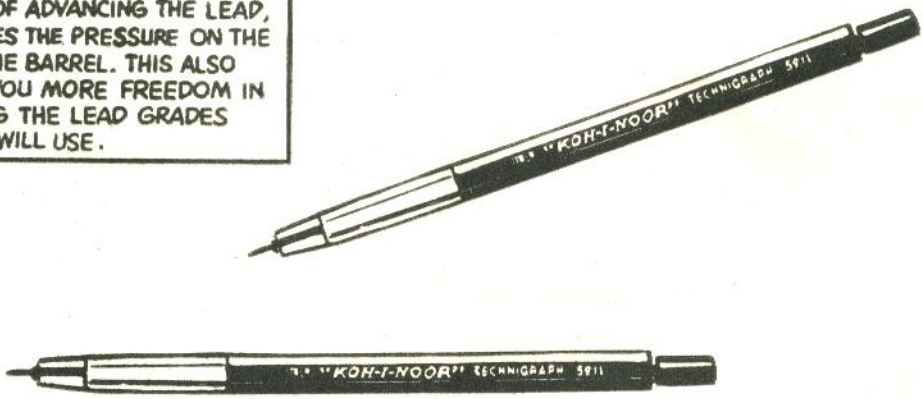
HERE WE HAVE THE MECHANICAL PENCIL. THE LEAD IS ADVANCED BY EITHER TWISTING THE TOP, PUSHING A BUTTON ON TOP OR PUSHING A BUTTON AT THE TIP. THE LEAD SIZES RANGE FROM 0.3 (THE FINEST POINT), 0.5 AND 0.7 (THE THICKEST).



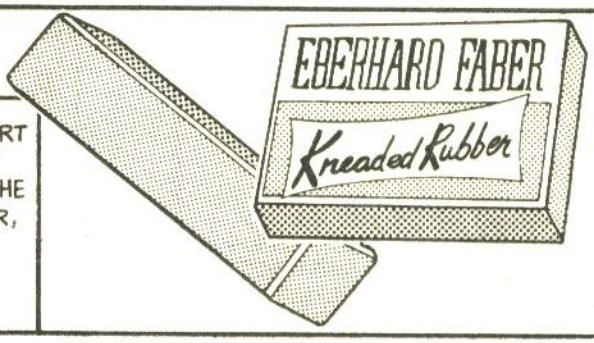
WE'RE ALL USED TO THE WOOD CLINCHED PENCIL. THEY'RE GRADED FROM #1 SOFT TO #4 HARD. THERE ARE ABOUT 17 GRADES, WHICH WILL COVER ALL OF YOUR NEEDS.

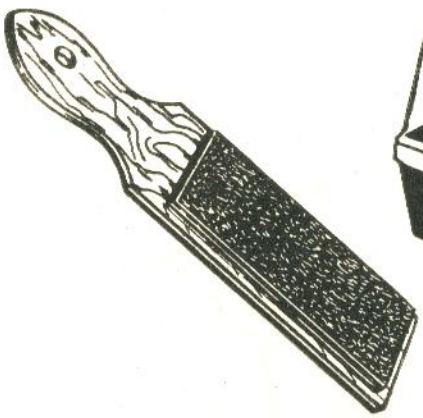


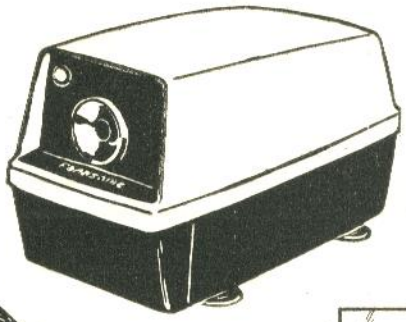
THE LEAD HOLDER IS A HIGHLY VERSATILE TOOL FOR THE PENCILLER. INSTEAD OF ADVANCING THE LEAD, IT RELEASES THE PRESSURE ON THE LEAD IN THE BARREL. THIS ALSO ALLOWS YOU MORE FREEDOM IN SELECTING THE LEAD GRADES THAT YOU WILL USE.



WHERE YOU HAVE PENCILLING, YOU WILL HAVE ERASING. SO GET USED TO IT, IT'S A FACT OF LIFE. THE FIRST IS THE REGULAR OLD FASHIONED RUBBER ERASER. BY USING SHORT CLEAN STROKES YOU WILL BE ABLE TO LIFT THE PENCIL LINE OUT WITHOUT DAMAGING THE PAPER. NEXT, WE HAVE THE KNEADED ERASER, WHICH CAN BE MOLDED INTO ANY SHAPE NECESSARY, ALLOWING YOU TO GET INTO THAT EXTRA TIGHT SPOT.

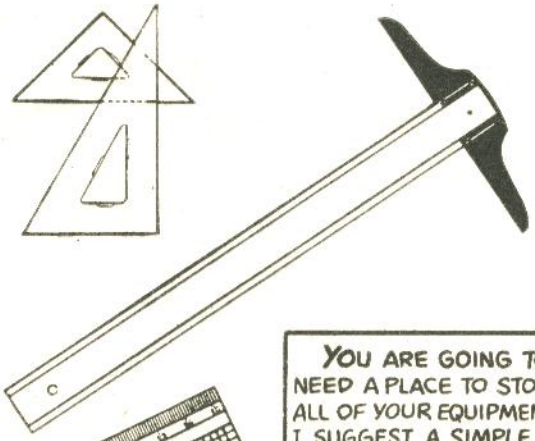


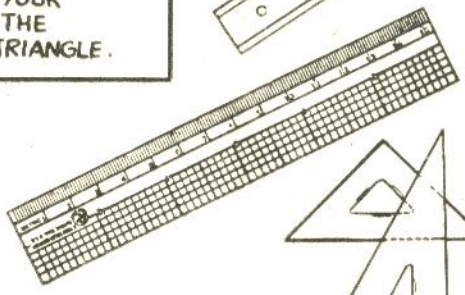


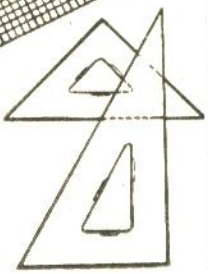


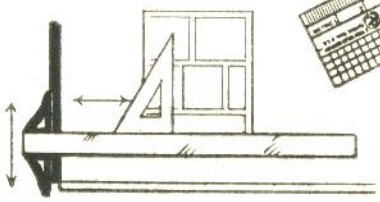
FOR THE WOOD CLINCHED PENCIL, ALMOST ANY PORTABLE OR ELECTRIC SHARPENER IS OKAY. FOR LEAD HOLDERS AND MECHANICALS, HOWEVER, YOU WILL NEED A SANDING BLOCK.

FOR DRAWING STRAIGHT LINES, RULERS ARE INVALUABLE. AMONG THE MANY TYPES AVAILABLE, THE LONG T-SQUARE SATISFIES SEVERAL NEEDS AND REALLY COMES IN HANDY FOR THOSE LONG LINES. THE TRIANGLE IS USED TOGETHER WITH THE T-SQUARE. PLACING THE T ACROSS THE DRAWING SURFACE AND RESTING THE RAISED EDGE EITHER TO YOUR RIGHT OR LEFT HAND SIDE, YOU THEN PLACE YOUR TRIANGLE ALONG THE HORIZONTAL LINE OF IT AND DRAW YOUR PARALLEL LINE ALONG THE STRAIGHT SIDE OF THE TRIANGLE.



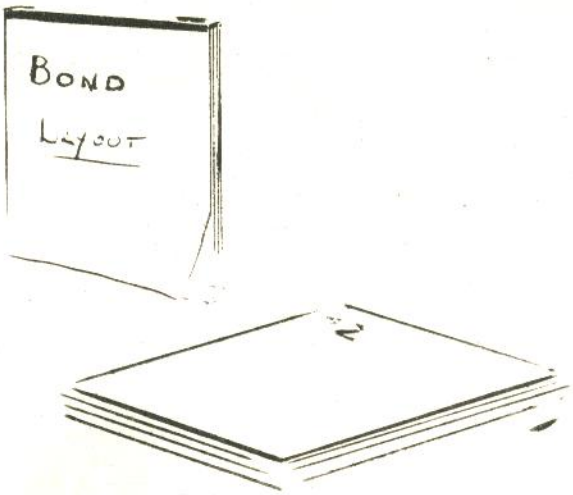






YOU ARE GOING TO NEED A PLACE TO STORE ALL OF YOUR EQUIPMENT. I SUGGEST A SIMPLE SHOE BOX. IT'S SMALL, EASY TO STORE AND IS SHALLOW ENOUGH TO ALLOW YOU TO SEE EVERYTHING YOU'VE PLACED IN IT. WHEN YOU NEED MORE SPACE, SIMPLY ADD ANOTHER SHOE BOX AND BE SURE TO NUMBER THEM FOR EASY REFERENCE.

AS IMPORTANT AS WHAT YOU DRAW WITH IS WHAT YOU DRAW ON. THERE ARE THREE MAJOR TYPES OF PAPER AND EACH HAS A DIFFERENT APPLICATION TO THE PENCILLER. THERE'S BOND LAYOUT PAPER, WHICH GIVES A CLEAN LOOK TO ALL YOUR ROUGH SKETCHES AND TAKES PENCILS OR MARKERS EQUALLY WELL. MOST PROFESSIONALS USE #2 BRISTOL BOARD WHICH IS USED MAINLY FOR COLOR ART, AND WE'LL GET INTO IT MORE IN A FUTURE ISSUE.



FOR MOST OF YOU STARTING OUT, IT IS SAFE TO SAY THAT YOU DON'T HAVE A PROFESSIONAL QUALITY DRAWING BOARD. DON'T FRET. ALL YOU REALLY NEED IS A SMOOTH, FLAT SURFACE ON WHICH TO REST AND HOLD WHAT YOU ARE WORKING ON.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

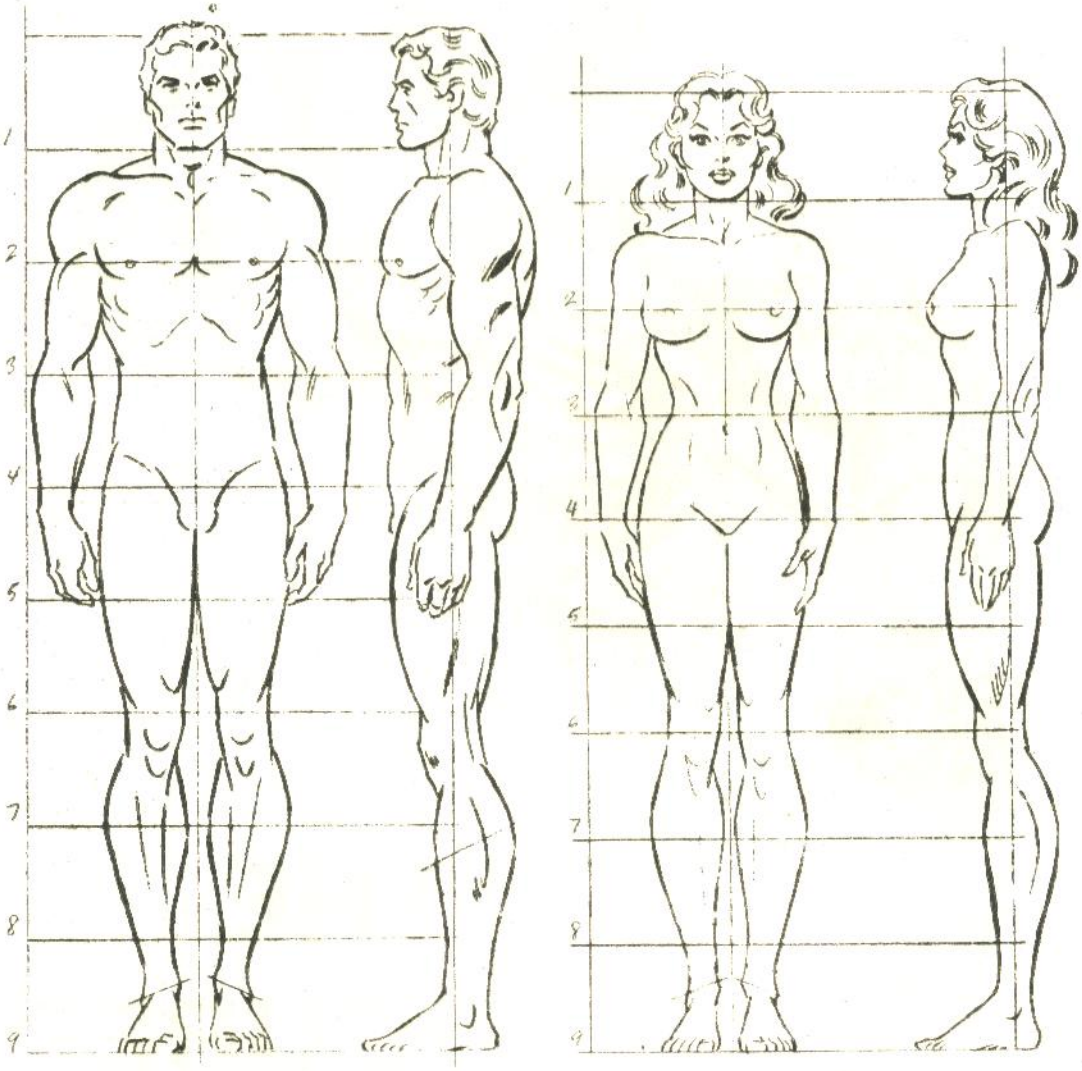
PENS AND INKS: WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY AND ***HOW!***

CHAPTER TWO

"THE FIGURE"

THE HEROIC MALE AND FEMALE ARE TALLER AND MORE SOLID LOOKING. IN THE CASE OF THE MALE, HE IS BROADER, MORE MASSIVE AND MUCH MORE MUSCULAR. THE HEROIC FEMALE, ALTHOUGH JUST AS FEMININE AS HER NORMAL COUNTERPART, HAS A MUCH BROADER LOOK AT THE SHOULDERS. DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN THE NORMAL FIGURE AND THE HEROIC FIGURE IS ALL IMPORTANT IN GETTING THE READER TO TRULY BELIEVE THAT WHO THEY SEE IS TRULY A HERO, AND NOT SOME JERK WHO JUST LIKES TO WEAR HIS P.J.'S TO WORK EVERY DAY!

HEROIC PROPORTIONS

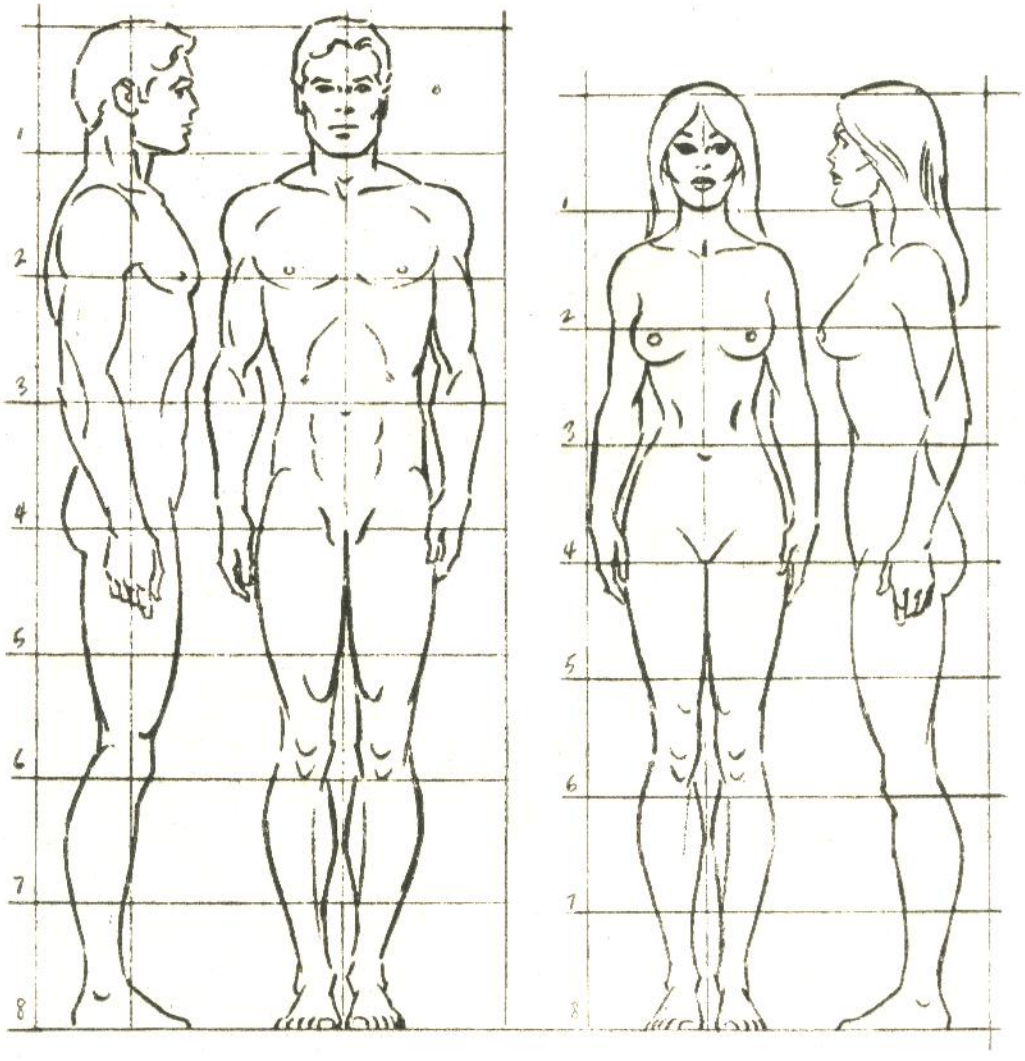


1 CHIN 2 NIPPLES 3 NAVEL 4 GROIN 6 KNEE 9 BOTTOM OF FEET

NOTICE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE REALISTIC FIGURE AND THE HEROIC FIGURE. THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO BE LEARNED FROM THIS COMPARISON IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE HEAD AND THE BODY.

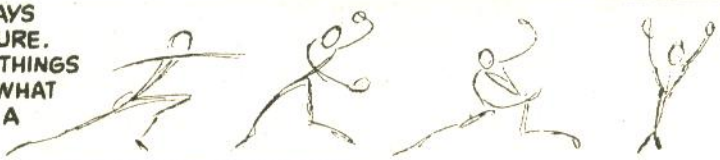
HERE YOU SEE THE HEAD CHART FOR THE AVERAGE PERSON (WE SHOULD ALL BE SO AVERAGE!). THE MALE IS MUSCULAR, BUT NOT OVERDONE. THE FEMALE SHOULD BE SOFTER LOOKING AND LESS ANGULAR. SHE IS ROUNDED WHERE THE MALE IS NORMALLY STRAIGHT. FAT, SKINNY, SHORT OR TALL, THE SIMILARITY OF THE FIGURE IS THERE. USE THE HEAD AS A GUIDE, AND THE BODY IS PROPORTIONATE TO IT.

REALISTIC PROPORTIONS

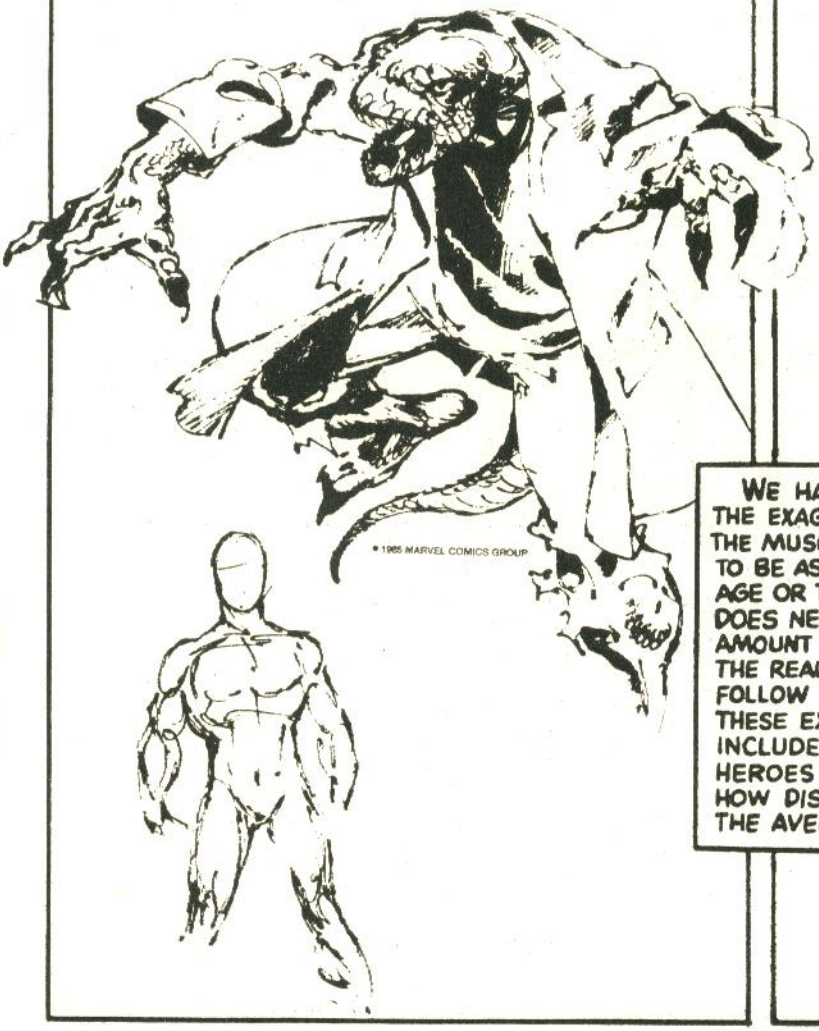


1 CHIN 2 NIPPLES 3 NAVEL 4 GROIN 6 BOTTOM OF KNEE 8 BOTTOM OF FEET

THE FIGURE SHOULD ALWAYS BEGIN WITH THE STICK FIGURE. THESE MARVELOUS LITTLE THINGS WILL ENABLE YOU TO SEE WHAT THE ACTION SHOULD BE IN A SCENE.



TAKE NOTE OF THE HEROIC POSE TO THE RIGHT. NOTICE HOW ONLY THE POSE OF THE FIGURE IS ABLE TO SUGGEST NOBILITY AND CONFIDENCE. VISUALIZE THE SHOT YOU ARE GOING TO INTERPRET FOR YOUR READERS. UNDERSTANDING BODY LANGUAGE COMES IN PRETTY HANDY WHEN YOU HAVE A POINT TO GET ACROSS WITHOUT ANY WORDS TO EXPRESS IT.



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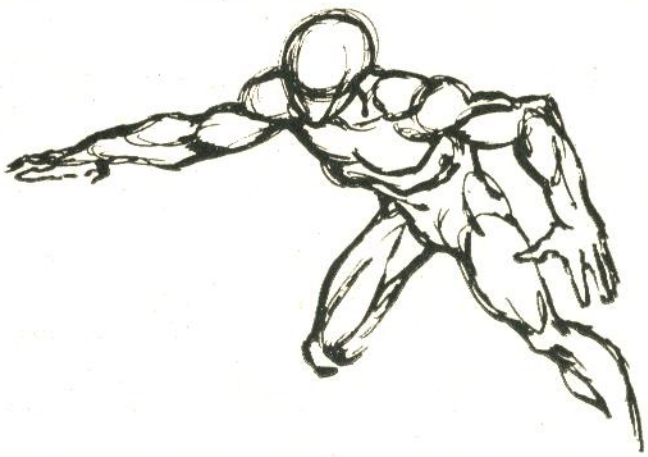
WE HAVE AN EXAMPLE HERE OF THE EXAGGERATED FIGURE. WHILE THE MUSCULATURE DOES NOT HAVE TO BE AS CONSTANT AS THE AVERAGE OR THE HEROIC FIGURE, IT DOES NEED TO HAVE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF BELIEVABILITY FOR THE READER TO WANT TO VISUALLY FOLLOW THE FIGURE'S ACTION. THESE EXAGGERATED FIGURES INCLUDE ELVES, GNOMES OR HEROES WHOSE POWERS SOMEHOW DISTORT THE IMAGE OF THE AVERAGE HERO'S BODY.

MUSCLES AT WORK

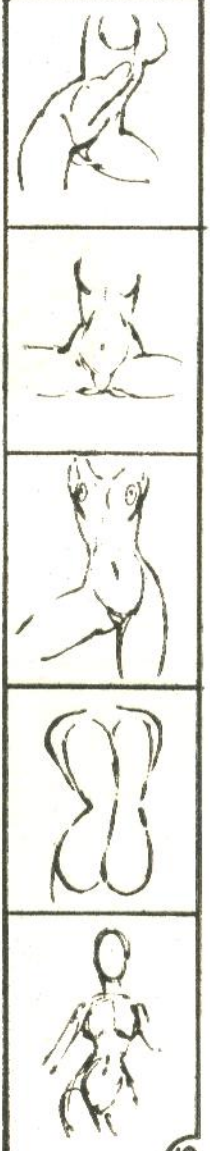
BY USING THE MOTION OF THE MUSCLE, THE ARTIST IS ABLE TO SHOW THE READER MOVEMENT AND EFFORT. IF SUPPORTED BY ONLY ONE LEG, DOES THE OTHER LEG SHOW THE STRAIN OF THE EXTRA WEIGHT? THIS USUALLY GOES UNNOTICED, BUT THIS IS ANOTHER ANGLE THE PRO HAS TO BE CONCERNED WITH.



LOOK AT YOUR OWN ARM. NOTICE HOW THE MUSCLES ARE SEPARATED BY EXAMINING THE MOVEMENT OF YOUR OWN MUSCLES AND OF OTHERS AROUND YOU. USE THIS KNOWLEDGE TO HELP YOU IN YOUR DRAWING, ONLY REMEMBER, YOU AND I ARE NOT HEROES (I THINK), SO YOU'LL HAVE TO MAGNIFY THIS EFFECT QUITE A BIT.

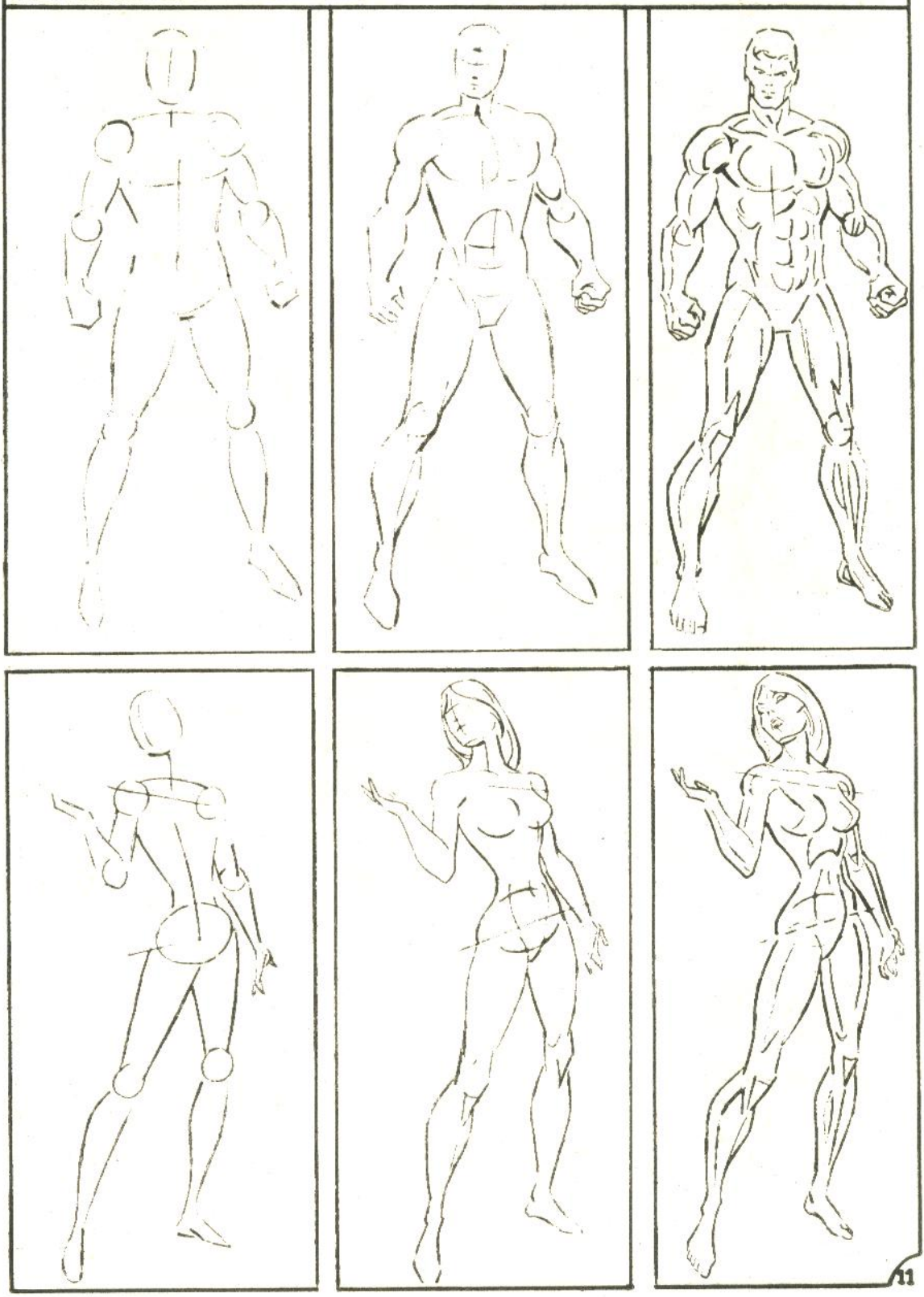
WHEN DUPER MAN PICKS UP THE PLANET WHUZZAT, WE BELIEVE HE CAN DO IT WITH THE SAME EFFORT IT WOULD TAKE FOR YOU OR ME TO LIFT UP A QUART OF MILK. THE MUSCLE MOTION IN BOTH CASES IS THE SAME, BUT BE SURE TO EXAGGERATE IT.

THE FEMALE BODY IS VASTLY DIFFERENT IN DESIGN FROM THE MALE (THANK HEAVENS FOR THAT). THE MUSCLES ARE SMOOTHER, WITH LESS DETAIL, AND ARE MORE DRAWN OUT. THERE IS ALMOST NO RIPPLE AS THERE IS IN MOST MALES.



TAKE A LOOK AT THESE DRAWINGS AND YOU WILL SEE THAT THE FEMALE IS MORE GRACEFUL AND EXPRESSIVE. SHE MOVES LIGHTLY AND SOFTLY, ALWAYS KEEPING HER FEMININE QUALITY. THE BODY LANGUAGE OF THE MALE IS DIFFERENT THAN THAT OF THE FEMALE. THE HEROIC FEMALE ALSO SHOULD BE GIVEN SOME OF THESE TRAITS IN HER MOVEMENTS AS WELL.

WE HATE TO BE REPETITIVE, BUT YOU CAN'T HAVE TOO MUCH KNOWLEDGE OF THE STICK FIGURE AND HOW TO FLESH IT OUT FROM THE START TO THE FINISH. HERE IS ANOTHER HELPFUL SKETCH OF THE COMPLETE PROCESS.



ON OCCASIONS WHERE YOU HAVE TO DRAW CHARACTERS LARGER THAN HEROIC PROPORTIONS, YOU MUST STILL SKETCH IT OUT FIRST. STARTING WITH THE SAME FIGURE AS THE STANDARD HERO, SIMPLY LENGTHEN THE MAJOR AXIS POINTS, ESPECIALLY THE HIPS AND SHOULDERS. IT WILL NOW BE MUCH SIMPLER TO FLESH IT OUT AND KEEP THE PROPER PROPORTIONS.

IN ACTION SCENES, YOU WANT TO SUGGEST MOVEMENT. YOU HAVE TO CATCH THE FIGURE IN MID-STRIDE AND SHOW IT FROM THE ANGLE OF THE "CAMERA". YOU WILL HAVE TO CUT A PIECE OFF OF YOUR FULL FIGURE. THIS IS CALLED FORESHORTENING. IT'S IMPORTANT TO DRAW THE FULL FIGURE FIRST AND THEN REMOVE THE PARTS THAT WOULD NOT BE VISIBLE TO THE "CAMERA".

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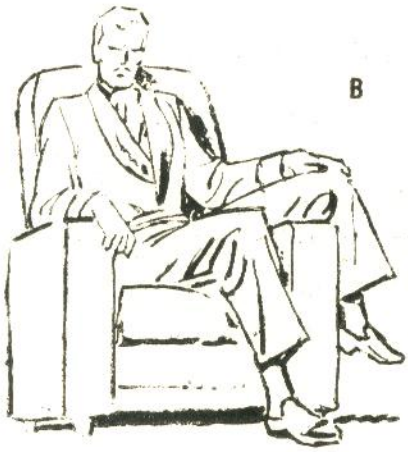
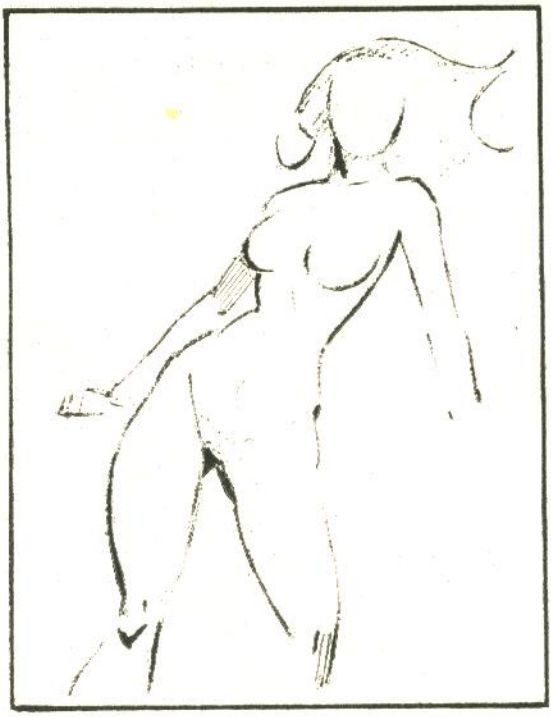
IN ANY COMIC, YOU WILL HAVE A CERTAIN NUMBER OF PAGES THAT WILL HAVE "DEAD" SCENES, THOSE IN WHICH ABSOLUTELY NOTHING HAPPENS. ALTHOUGH NOTHING IS HAPPENING, THE READER'S ATTENTION SHOULD STILL BE HELD. IN THIS SCENE, FIGURE B DOMINATES THE MOOD BY EXUDING CONFIDENCE AND SEEMING TO BE DIABOLICALLY DEEP IN THOUGHT.

WHILE FIGURE A IS OBVIOUSLY AN UNINTERESTING ZOMBIE.

A



B



HERE, EVEN IN AN EXTREMELY UNFINISHED FORM YOU CAN SEE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN UNINTERESTING POSE AND AND AN EXPRESSIVE ONE. IN FIGURE A THE SUBJECT IS STRAIGHTFORWARD AND OPEN. NOW THIS IS NOT NECESSARILY A BAD THING, BUT WE WANT TO SHOW EXPRESSION AND INTENT WITHOUT TEXT. FIGURE B IS ALSO STRAIGHTFORWARD, BUT IT IS FAIRLY OBVIOUS THAT THE CHARACTER MEANS ***BUSINESS!***

OBIVIOUSLY, THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT KINDS OF MASSIVE FIGURES. REMEMBER, THE VILLAIN, REGARDLESS OF STATURE, IS STILL DRAWN USING HEROIC PROPORTIONS. YOU CAN CHANGE THE WAIST SIZE BY INCREASING OR DECREASING THE DEPTH OF THE STOMACH UNDER THE RIB CAGE. THE DEEPER THE STOMACH, THE THINNER THE WAISTLINE LOOKS.

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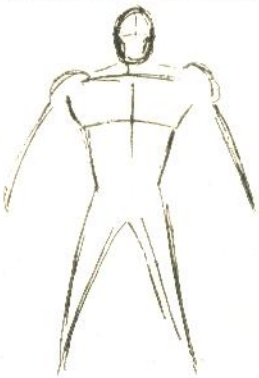
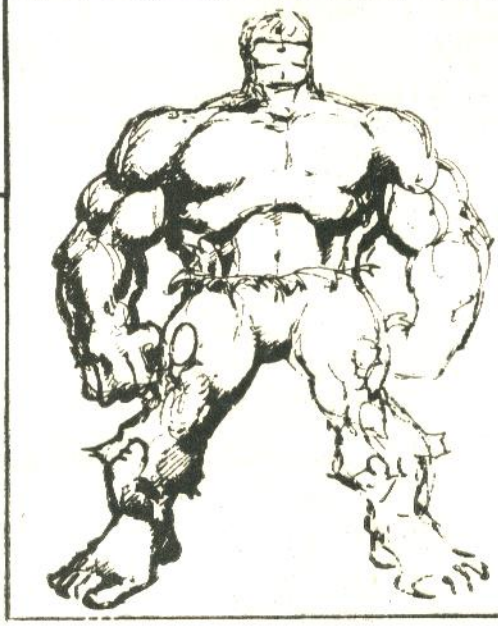
THE OVERMUSCLED BODY SEEMS TO BE ALWAYS CLENCHED. THE RIPPLES ARE EVERYWHERE AND THE MUSCLES REACH TO ALMOST EVERY MOVEMENT. ANOTHER WAY TO CONTROL THE IMAGE IS BY INCREASING OR DECREASING THE SIZE OF THE PECTORAL MUSCLES OF THE CHEST. MAKE SURE THE LEGS ARE NOT TOO LARGE FOR THE MIDSECTION.

LOOK AT THE OVERMUSCLED MASSIVE FIGURE. YOU WILL BEGIN TO SEE THAT DETAIL DRAWING IS REALLY NOT SO NECESSARY HERE. EVEN THOUGH IT'S BARELY OUT OF THE STICK FIGURE STAGE, IT HAS ALL THE THINGS YOU WANT TO SHOW.





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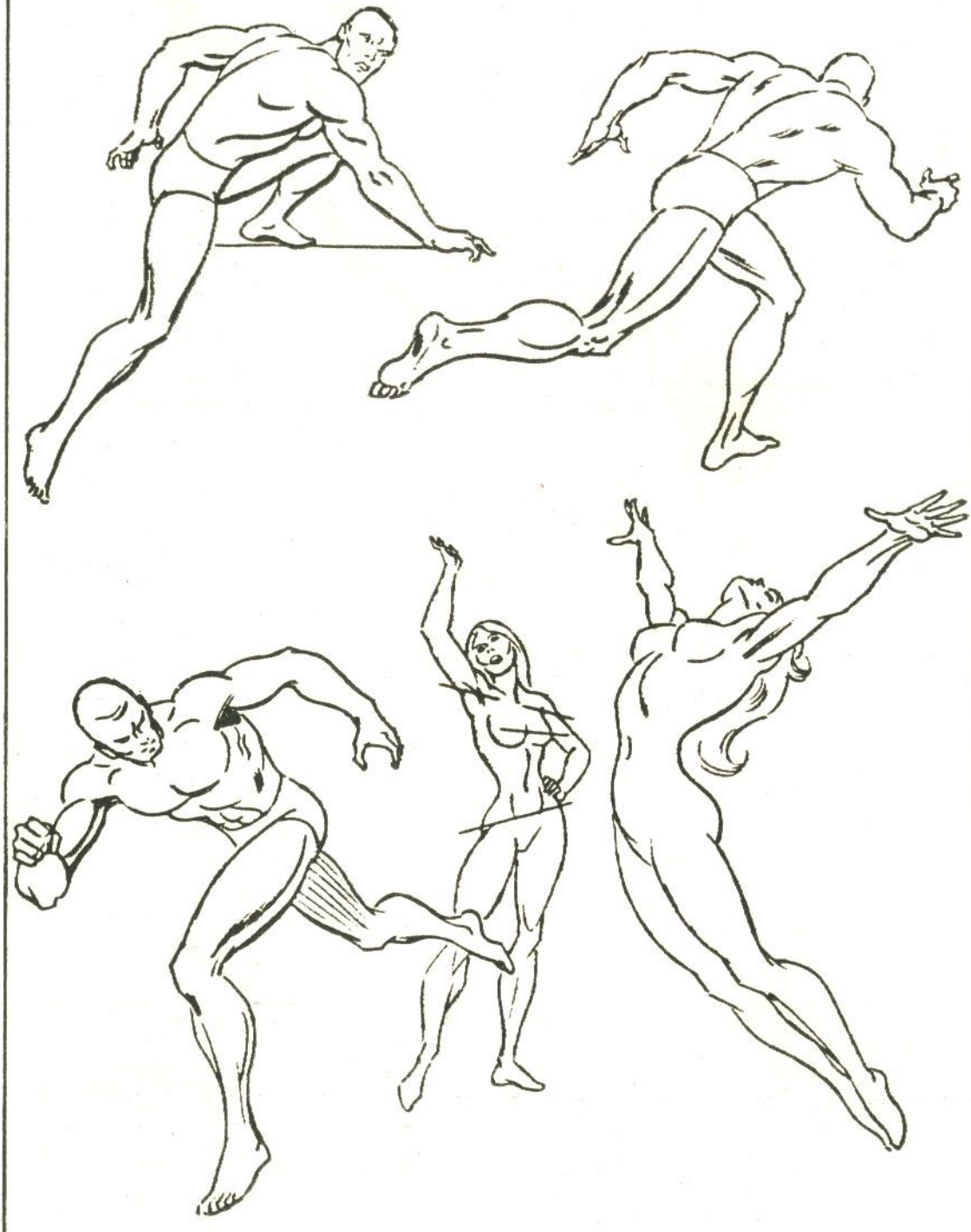
HERE IS ANOTHER METHOD OF BASIC DRAWING CALLED CIRCLING OUT THE CHARACTER. AGAIN, YOU MUST KNOW THE SHOT BEFORE FINISHING IT OFF. ALTHOUGH THE FINISHED EXAMPLE IS ONLY FROM THE WAIST UP, THE FIGURE IS CIRCLED OUT WITH THE ENTIRE FIGURE INCLUDED FOR PERSPECTIVE. BECAUSE I WANTED TO SHOW A PARTICULARY BULKY POSE, I PLAYED DOWN THE DEPTH TO GIVE THE IMAGE OF WIDER HIPS TO POINT OUT THE LARGE PROPORTIONS HERE.

THE UNFINISHED FIGURE WITHOUT ALL OF IT'S DETAIL CAN TEACH US A LOT ABOUT HOW TO PENCIL THE STICK FIGURE IN MOTION. NOTICE THE UPPER RIGHT HAND FIGURE. IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH PROPER BALANCE, THE HEAD IS IN A DIRECT LINE WITH THE FOOT THAT IS SUPPORTING THE BODY'S WEIGHT.

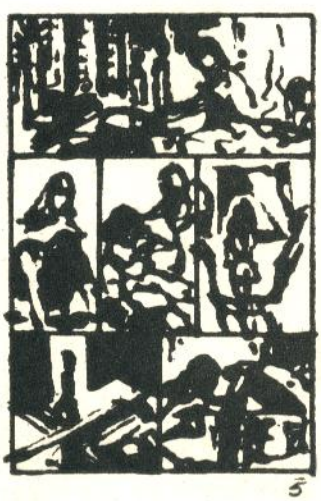


HERE ARE A FEW MORE EXAMPLES OF THE FLUIDITY IN THE WOMAN'S MOVEMENT. THE LONG, GRACEFUL LINES GIVE THE FEELING THAT THE FEMALE FIGURE IS GLIDING THROUGH THE SCENE.

AGAIN, NOTICE THE LENGTHENING OF THE LINES AND THE SMOOTHING OF THE MUSCLES. BECAUSE THE BREASTS ARE SUPPORTED BY THE CHEST MUSCLES, NOTICE HOW THE BREASTS REACT TO MOVEMENT. BE VERY SUBTLE TO AVOID MAKING THESE MOVEMENTS SEEM AWKWARD. THE AIM IS TO SHOW SMOOTH AND NATURAL MOVEMENT.

STORYTELLING - CHAPTER THREE

WHEN THE WRITER BRINGS IN HIS SCRIPT, THE STORY IS FAR FROM TOLD YET. THE SAME SCRIPT THAT IS INTERPRETED BY TWENTY DIFFERENT ARTISTS WILL BE TWENTY DIFFERENT STORIES. SIMILAR TO FINGERPRINTS, NO TWO ARTISTS SEE A STORY FROM THE SAME POINT OF VIEW. YOUR JOB AS THE ARTIST BEGINS WITH KEEPING THE STORY CLEAR AND VERY CAREFULLY MAKING SURE THAT THE READER NEVER GETS CONFUSED. IF YOU ARE FOLLOWING THE SCRIPT AND IT CALLS FOR SOMETHING THAT YOU PERSONALLY BELIEVE IS ABSURD, YOU MIGHT JUST DRAW IT THAT WAY AND YOU WILL LOSE THE READERS. IT'S A TRAP, LIKE MANY OTHERS, THAT ARTISTS ARE VERY PRONE TO FALLING INTO.



WHAT IS STORYTELLING ALL ABOUT? BASICALLY YOU MUST GET THE STORY ACROSS WITHOUT DISINVOLVING THE READER IN ANY WAY. IT HAS TO BE CLEAR AND YET AT THE SAME TIME SUBTLE BECAUSE YOU DON'T WANT TO INSULT ANYONE'S INTELLIGENCE. TALL ORDER? YEP, IT SURE IS, BUT BELIEVE ME, IT GETS EASIER AS YOU GO. I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET A FRIEND OF MINE. HIS NAME IS ***DUPERMAN*** AND HE HAS THE USUAL GORGEOUS SIDEKICK; HER NAME IS ***ELYSE***. THEY ARE HERE TO SHOW US HOW ***NOT*** TO TELL A STORY. AND TO START OUT YOUR GLOSSARY, CROPPING IS WHEN YOU SELECTIVELY REMOVE A PIECE OF THE FIGURE BECAUSE IT IS UNNECESSARY. IN THIS CASE HOWEVER, IT WAS THE CROP THAT WAS UNNECESSARY.

IN FIGURE 1, WE SEE WHAT IS SUPPOSED TO BE DUPE SPEEDING OVER THE CITY. IT IS INCORRECT, HOWEVER. FIRST OFF WE NEED TO ESTABLISH THAT DUPE CAN FLY TO GET HIM CREDITABLE WITH THE READERS. FOR ALL WE KNOW, THIS IS A SHOT OF DUPE CHECKING OUT THE LOCAL PIGEON ACTIVITY BY HANGING OUT THE WINDOW. AGAIN, FOR ALL WE KNOW, ONE OF DUPE'S POWERS IS REVERSE SUPER VISION THROUGH THE SOLES OF HIS FEET, AND THAT HE'S HANGING OUT THE WINDOW AGAIN.

Fig 1

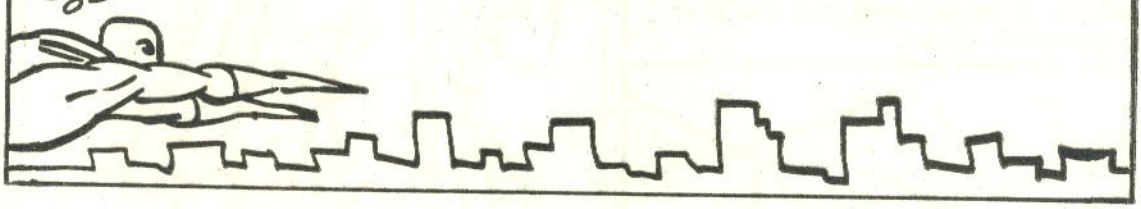


Fig 2

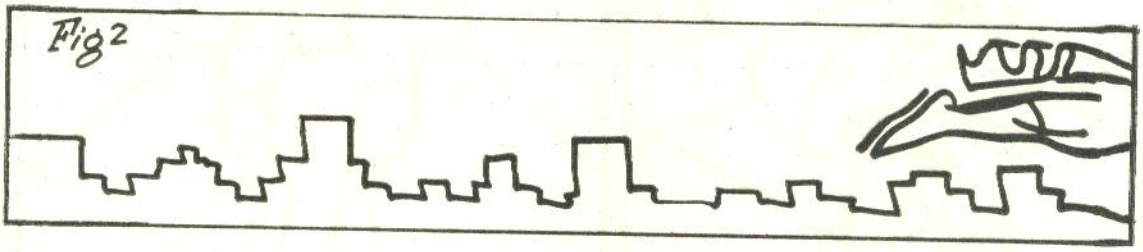
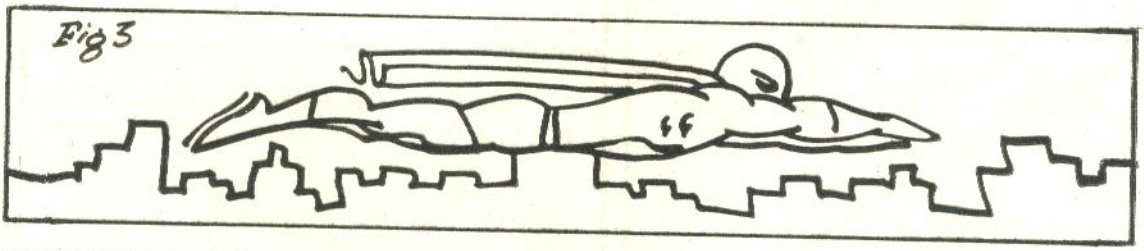
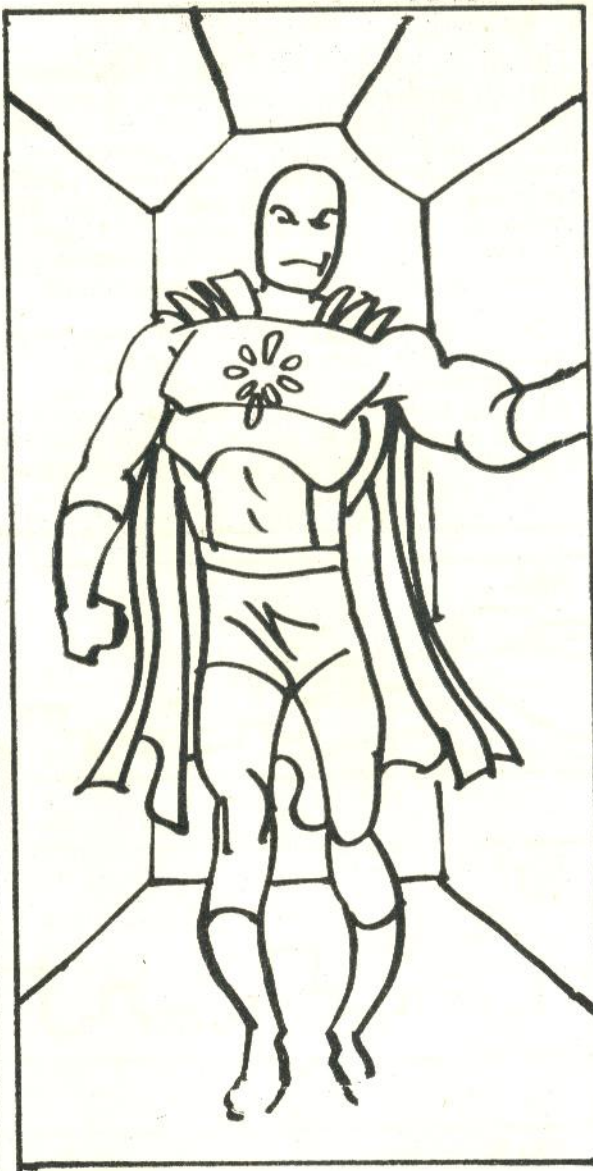


Fig 3



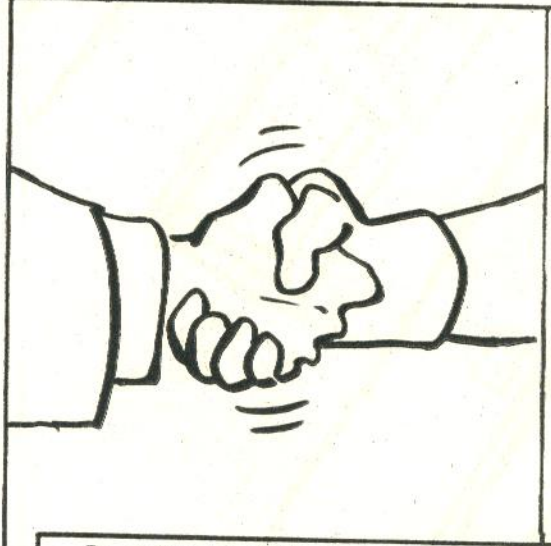
A QUICK RECAP; IN FIGURES 1 AND 2, ALTHOUGH DECENT SPEED SHOTS, THEY WILL NOT BE THE ESTABLISHING SHOTS THAT YOU WILL NEED TO REALISTICALLY HOLD THE READERS. MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE RANCH, IN FIGURE 3 WE LEFT OUR HERO SPEEDING OVER HIS CITY URBANOPOLIS, OR DID WE? DID THE CITY COUNCIL HONOR THEIR FAVORITE SON BY CREATING A GIANT STATUE OF HIM TO PUT AT THE TOP OF THEIR TALLEST BUILDING? I DON'T THINK SO, BUT YOU REALLY CAN'T BE SURE, CAN YOU? INTEGRATE YOUR CHARACTERS TO THE BACKGROUND, DON'T ATTACH THEM TO IT.

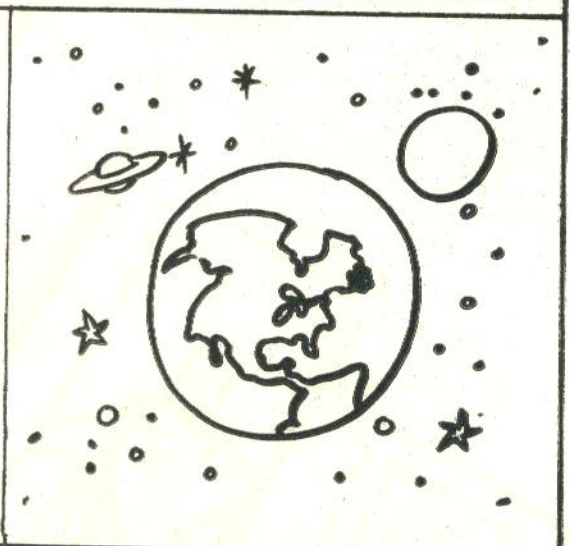
IN FIGURE 4, DUPERMAN IS NICELY DETACHED FROM THE PANEL BORDERS AS HE SHOULD BE. SO WHAT'S THE PROBLEM? THAT OLD DEVIL PERSPECTIVE IS THE ANSWER. THIS COULD BE A SHOT OF DUPE'S FLYING AWAY FROM THE GROUND, OR IT COULD BE A SERIOUSLY TEED OFF DUPE BECAUSE (KNOWING DUPE'S ADVENTURES THE WAY WE DO) SOMEONE JUST SHRUNK HIS ASSISTANT ELYSE TO THE SIZE OF A WELL PROPORTIONED KEWPIE DOLL. THE ARTIST WANTED TO SHOW US A NICE TAKE OFF SHOT, AND INSTEAD WE GOT A BACKGROUND THAT THE CHARACTERS BLENDED INTO, AND A TOTALLY CONFUSING SCENE.



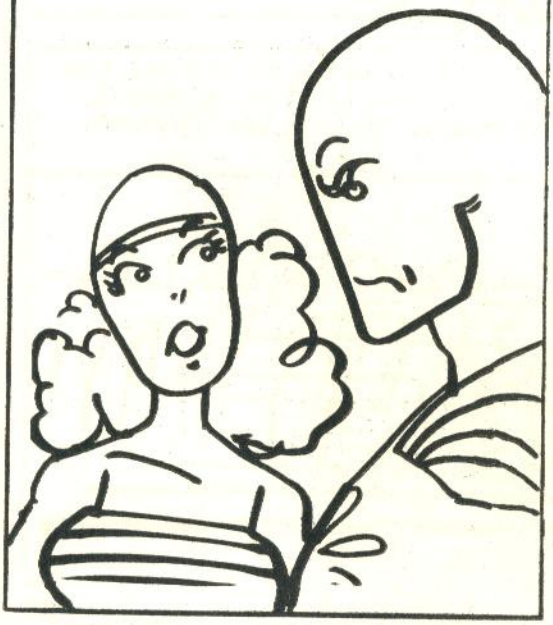
ANOTHER CROPPING PROBLEM, LOOK AT FIG. 5. A VERY SERIOUS LOOKING DUPERMAN HERE. BUT WHAT COULD BE SO SERIOUS THAT WOULD CALL FOR HIM TO BE AS MERCILESSLY CROPPED THE WAY THAT HE IS? IN TRUTH, THERE IS NO EXCUSE NOT TO SHOW ALL OF HIS BODY HERE.

BY THE WAY, WHEN I SAY "THE CAMERA" I MEAN THE POINT OF VIEW THAT WE THE READERS HAVE WITHIN THE COMIC. THE PURPOSE OF GOOD STORYTELLING IS TO GET THE STORY ACROSS WHILE INVOLVING THE READER AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. YOU, AS THE ARTIST, CAN'T DO THAT IF YOU DON'T SEE IT FROM THE POINT OF VIEW THAT THE READER WILL HAVE. IT IS AN IMAGINARY CAMERA THAT CAN FLY THROUGH THE IMAGINARY ALIEN DIMENSIONS THAT ARE SO MUCH A PART OF OUR CRAFT SO THAT WE "MERE" HUMANS CAN SEE THEM.





BY ACCIDENT, DUPE HAS LET EVILDOERS INC. SLIP THROUGH HIS FINGERS WHILE TRYING TO GET BACK FROM THAT ALTERNATE UNIVERSE. IN THE FIRST PANEL THE LOVELY ELYSE IS FACING HIM FROM THE LEFT AND DUPE IS ON THE RIGHT. WHAT HAPPENED THEN? WE LOST THE CONTINUITY BECAUSE WE NO LONGER KNOW WHERE DUPE IS IN RELATION TO ELYSE. YOU CANNOT LOSE THE SPATIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TWO CHARACTERS WITHOUT LOSING THE READER TOO.



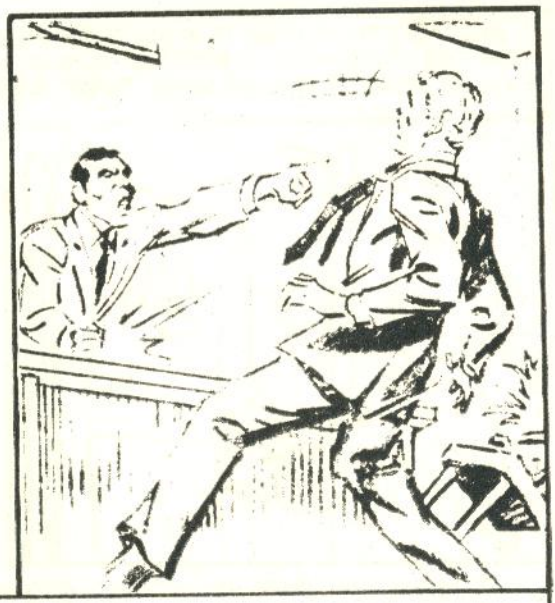
TO CREATE BELIEVABILITY IN AN INTERIOR ANGLE SHOT YOU CAN GIVE THE READER A POINT OF REFERENCE. YOU CAN HANG A PICTURE. IF THE PICTURE IS HANGING STRAIGHT IN A TILT SHOT, OBVIOUSLY THE ROOM IS STRAIGHT. YOU CAN ALSO DO THIS WITH FLOWERS ON THE TABLE OR A CHILD'S BALL THAT HAS NOT ROLLED ACROSS THE FLOOR BECAUSE THE ROOM IS NOT REALLY ON A TILT.

HERE IS A SHOT OF DUPE RACING ACROSS TOWN TO FIND THE CAPTURED ELYSE. CAN YOU SEE HIM? HOW CAN'T YOU, THERE ARE EIGHT OF HIM. NOW DON'T GET ME WRONG, THAT'S OKAY, BUT REMEMBER HOW THE EYE TRAVELS ACROSS THE PAGE, *LEFT TO RIGHT*. NUFF SAID?

AS THE STORYTELLER, IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO MAINTAIN CONTINUITY. EVENTS THAT ARE OCCURING NOW *MUST* BE CONSISTENT WITH WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE, SO WITH THAT IN MIND, ***WHAT'S WRONG WITH THESE PANELS?***

IT SEEMS THAT DUPE HAS STEPPED INTO AN ALTERNATE UNIVERSE WHERE LEFT IS RIGHT AND VICE VERSA. THIS SHOULD HAVE BEEN HANDLED BY HAVING HIM OPEN THE DOOR TO THE LEFT IN THE FIRST PLACE.

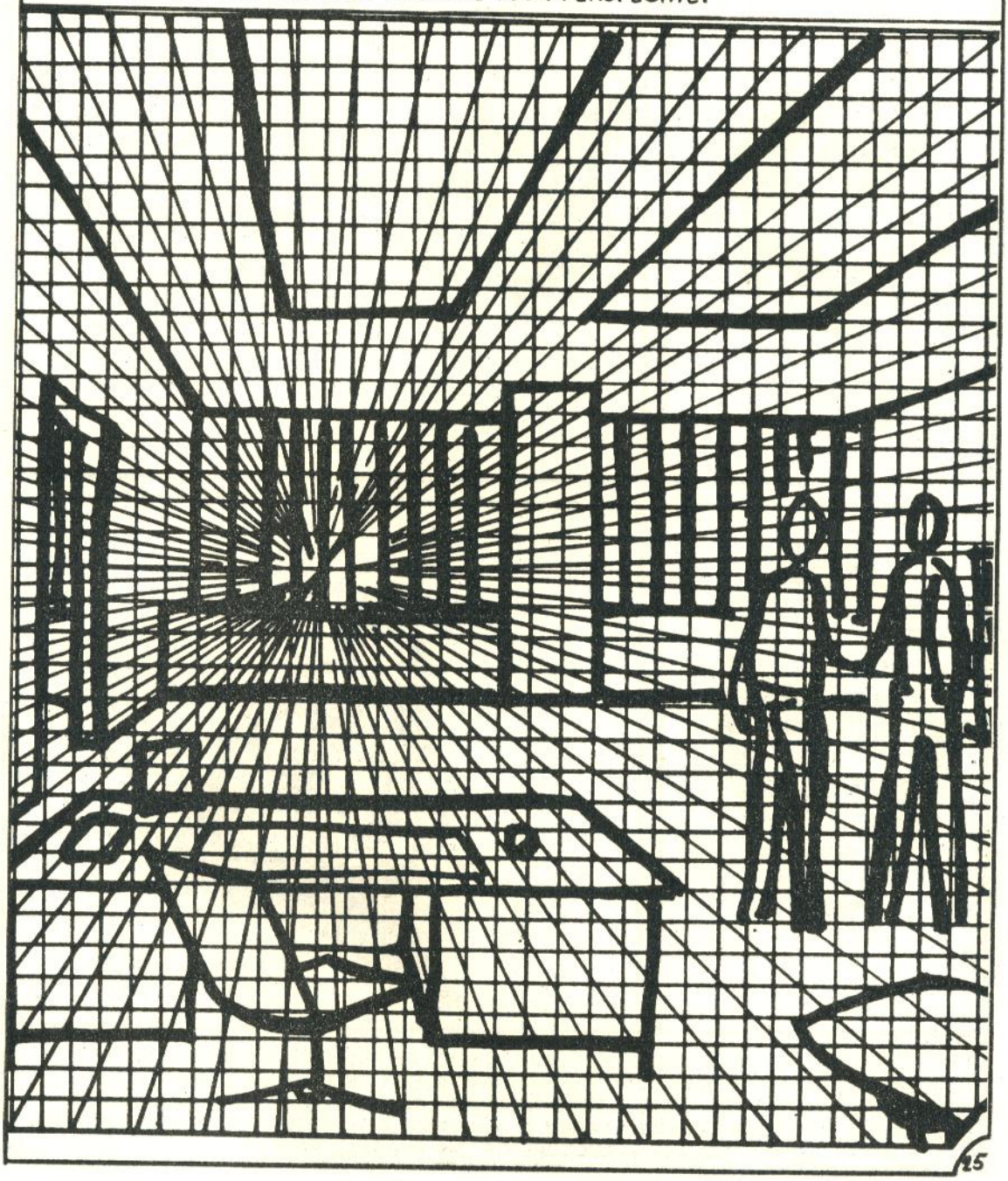
WHILE MEETING ELYSE FOR LUNCH, DUPE LEANS ON THE PANEL BORDERS WHILE HE IS WAITING (WOMEN ALWAYS TAKE TOO LONG TO GET READY, DON'T THEY? JUST KIDDING). THE ONLY THING WRONG WITH THAT IS THAT THE BORDERS JUST DON'T EXIST! YOU CAN'T CONTAIN THE CHARACTERS WITHIN THE BORDER AS SUCH WITHOUT MAKING IT SEEM THAT THEIR MOVEMENTS ARE CONFINED TO ONLY THAT SMALL AMOUNT OF SPACE. MAKE THEM ACT WITHIN THE BORDERS, DON'T MAKE THEM A PART OF IT.



HERE ARE FOUR EXAMPLES OF CHARACTERS EITHER INTERACTING WITH EACH OTHER OR THEIR SITUATIONS. IN PANEL ONE THE POOR GUY IS PROBABLY SWEARING TO GO BACK ON THE WAGON, BUT WE CAN SEE THE REACTION TO WHAT IS GOING ON FROM HIS HANDS, FACIAL EXPRESSION (FACES NEXT ISH), AND HIS BODY LANGUAGE. YOU MUST LEARN TO BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE FEELINGS WITHOUT THE ACCOMPANYING WORDS, OR THEY WILL NOT BE BELIEVABLE. DID YOU EXPLAIN OUT LOUD WHAT WAS GOING ON THE LAST TIME A GORILLA SWUNG BY YOUR WINDOW? PANEL TWO IS A CONFRONTATION AND A REACTION ALL IN ONE. YOU CAN FIT THIS MUCH CONTENT INTO A PANEL TOO, BUT REALIZE THE LIMITS TO WHAT YOU CAN FIT IN ONE PANEL WITHOUT SEEMING CROWDED. PANEL THREE IS A STRAIGHT REACTION SHOT. NOTICE THE MUSCLE LINES ***UNDER*** THE CLOTHING. IN PANEL FOUR, THE CHARACTERS ARE REACTING TO SOMETHING THAT IS OFF CAMERA. YOU MUST SEE WHAT THEY ARE SEEING AS WELL AS THEY ARE OR THE SCENE HAS TOTALLY LOST THE BELIEVABLE EDGE.

THE ILLO'S ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE WERE EXAMPLES OF BOTH THE CLOSEUP AND THE LONG SHOT RESPECTIVELY. WE ARE CONCENTRATING ON THE ESTABLISHING SHOT HERE. DID EITHER OF THESE INTRODUCE OR TELL YOU SOMETHING? NO, HERE YOU HAVE LEFT THE READERS IN THE DARK. THIS IS A PRIME NO-NO IN OUR BIZ, THE READERS HAVE SIGNED ON BECAUSE THEY WANT TO BE PRIVY TO THINGS THAT EVEN THE CHARACTERS AREN'T IN ON YET. IN THE CASE OF THE LONG SHOT, YOU CAN'T TAKE US OUT OF VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS WHILE TRYING TO INTRODUCE US TO THEM.

THE GRID BELOW IS A BASIC GUIDE TO THE ESTABLISHING SHOT. JUST START THE LINES FROM THE CENTRAL HORIZON LINE AND PENCIL YOUR LINES IN LIGHTLY. THEN JUST ERASE THE GRID LINES AND YOU HAVE YOUR PERSPECTIVE.



FACES AND HEADS - CHAPTER FOUR PART ONE

TO KNOW THE HEAD AND FACE, JUST LIKE IN ANYTHING ELSE THAT WE HAVE TALKED ABOUT IN THIS COMIC, YOU MUST BE AT LEAST MODERATELY FAMILIAR WITH THE BASICS INVOLVED. FIRST, ***KNOW YOUR SKULL!***

LIKE THE FORENSIC SCIENTISTS OF TODAY, YOU CAN ESTABLISH ANYONE'S IDENTITY BY BUILDING UP OR SMOOTHING OUT THE SKIN AND FLESH ON THE SKULL. FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH THE CONTOURS OF THE SKULL, TRY TO IMAGINE IT FROM ALL ANGLES (A PLASTIC MODEL OF THE SKULL WHICH IS AVAILABLE ANYWHERE IS EXTREMELY HELPFUL) AND RELATE IT TO THE STRUCTURE OF THE FINISHED FACE.

ANOTHER SIDE VIEW OF THE SKULL. THIS TIME, HOWEVER, IT IS STRESSING THE COMPLETE PICTURE. NOTICE WHERE THE MOVEMENT OF THE MOUTH ORIGINATES. ALSO NOTE THE HEIGHT OF THE BROW IN RELATION TO THE TOP OF THE NOSE AND ITS BRIDGE.

ALSO SHOWN IS THE START OF THE "FLESHING OUT" PROCESS OF THE BASIC SKULL. IN THIS ILLO WE SEE WHERE THE ARTIST ADDS THE CARTILAGE TO THE BONE AND THE BEGINNINGS OF THE CHARACTERIZATION OF THE FACE. BUT DON'T BE FOOLED BY APPEARANCES! ALTHOUGH THIS FACE HAS A SLIGHT MASCULINE LOOK TO IT THE FLEXIBILITY OF USING THE SKULL AS A GUIDE TO YOUR FACE IS SUCH THAT YOU CAN STILL CHANGE ANYTHING OR EVERYTHING ABOUT IT. THIS FACE DOES NOT YET HAVE A GENDER.

HERE IS THE LOGICAL CONCLUSION OF THE FLESHING OUT PROCESS USED FOR THE FACE. HALF OF IT IS LEFT IN THE ORIGINAL BONEY FORM TO ILLUSTRATE A LITTLE ABOUT FLESH DEPTH.

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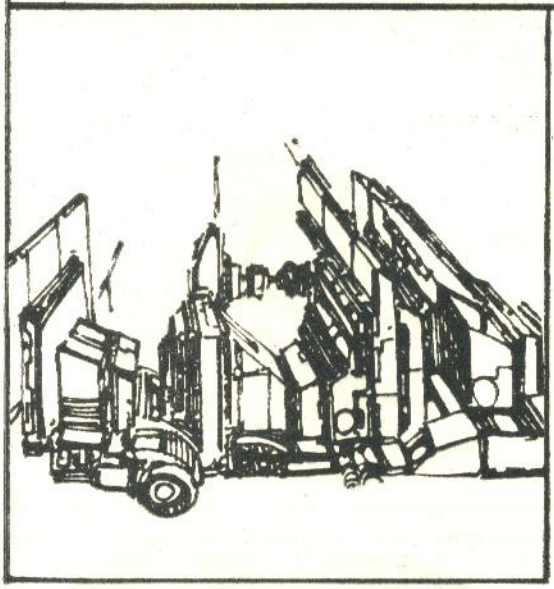
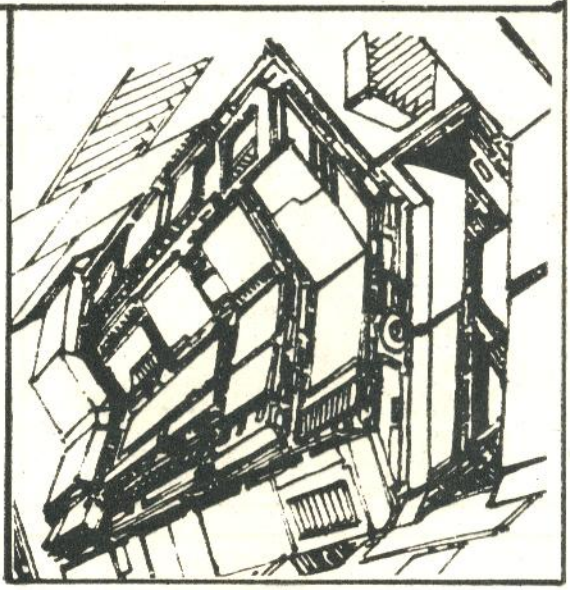
AS YOU CAN SEE HERE, MALE OR FEMALE, THERE IS NO HARD AND FAST RULE FOR SKULL SHAPE AND THUS, THERE IS LITTLE YOU CAN DO TO SIMILARIZE YOUR FACES. IN THE CASE OF THE FEMALE CHARACTER AND THE MALE, BELIEVE IT OR NOT, THEY SHARE A SIMILAR SKULL SHAPE.

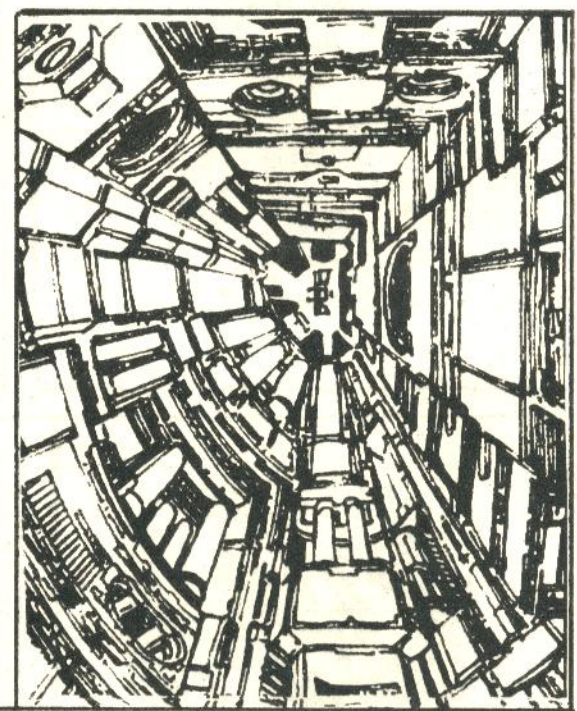
THE HEAD SOMETIMES VARIES ETHNICALLY. ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO RULE OR STEREOTYPICAL THING THAT SETS APART THE HEAD OF THE BLACK CHARACTER OR THE AMERICAN INDIAN, THERE ARE DEFINITELY THINGS THAT YOU MUST DO TO SHOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RACES. IF YOU DON'T BROADEN THE NOSE SLIGHTLY ON THE BLACK MAN'S FACE, IF YOU DON'T LENGTHEN HIS JAW EVER SO SLIGHTLY, YOU WILL MAKE YOUR READERS THINK THAT YOUR COLORIST HAS A PROBLEM.

BEFORE WE WRAP UP THIS ISSUE, I COULDN'T RESIST GIVING YOU JUST ONE LITTLE TASTE OF THE THINGS WE'LL COVER IN PART TWO OF FACES AND HEADS IN THE NEXT ISSUE, THE EXAGGERATED FACE. EVEN MORE THAN THE EXAGGERATED BODY, IT HAS THE ABILITY TO CONVEY TO THE READERS MORE ABOUT THE CHARACTER THAN ALMOST ANYTHING ELSE (WHEN IT IS CALLED FOR AND USED CORRECTLY) BECAUSE YOU ARE NOT HAMPERED BY THE PHYSICAL CONSTRAINTS OF THE NORMAL SKULL. YOU CAN (BY OVERSIZING THE PART OR EXPRESSION THAT YOU WANT TO EMPHASIZE) ESTABLISH THE INTENT OF THE CHARACTER IMMEDIATELY WITHOUT HAVING TO WASTE SPACE THAT YOU MAY NOT HAVE TELLING US A LITTLE ABOUT HIM OR HER AND THEN GOING ON FROM THERE. NOW THAT'S GOOD STORYTELLING!

TECHNOLOGY IN COMICS- CHAPTER FIVE PART ONE

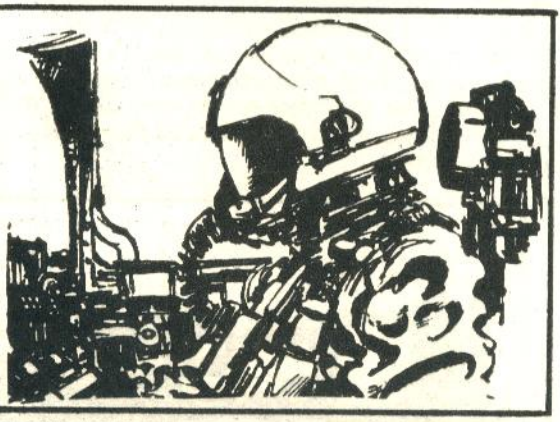




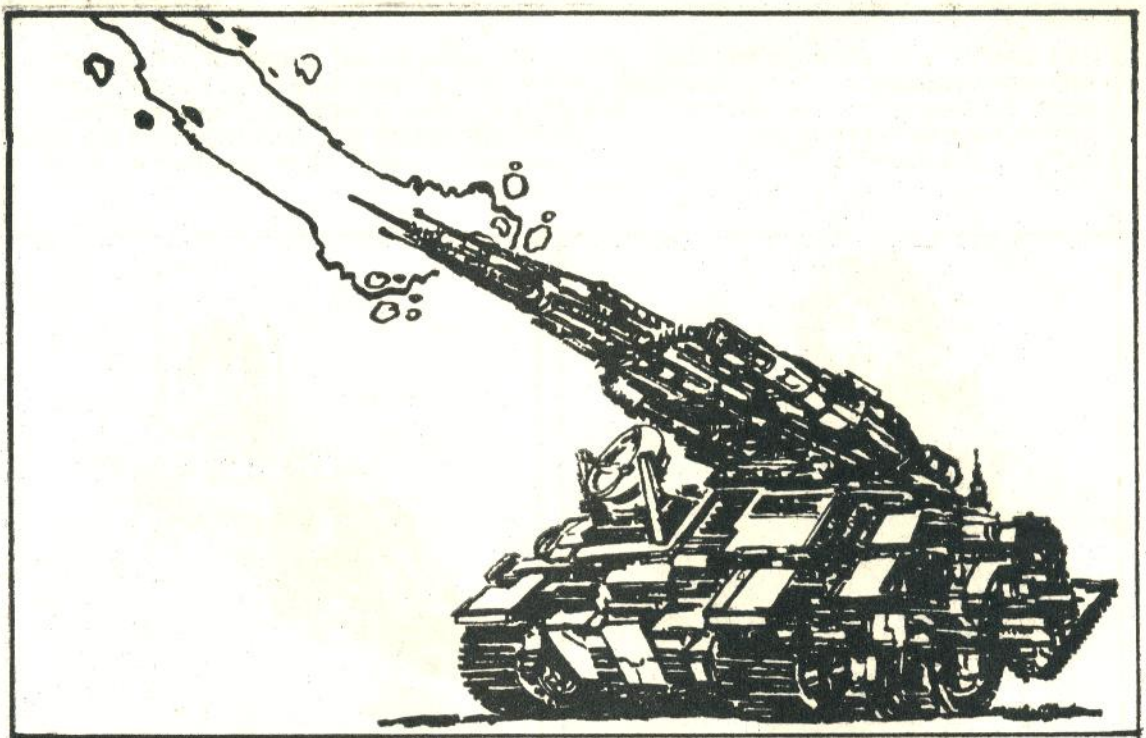


IN AN OTHERWORLDLY SETTING, MOST LIKELY THE PEOPLE WILL BE ALIVE BECAUSE OF LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEMS THAT ARE AS COMPLICATED AS ANYTHING THAT GOT THEM TO THEIR PLANET IN THE FIRST PLACE. THIS IS SOMETHING THAT WILL NOT FADE AWAY LIKE A FAD, NO, HEAVY TECHNOLOGY IS HERE TO STAY, AND YOU THE ARTIST MUST BE PREPARED. WITH TODAY'S CONCENTRATION ON SCIENCE FICTION, AGAIN, THE ARTIST MUST BE PART DESIGNER AS WELL AS ARTIST. STUDY THE DRAWINGS HERE, NOT AS GOOD ART OR AS SOMETHING INTERESTING TO SEE, BUT AS AN EXAMPLE OF JUST HOW FAR YOU MUST GO FOR THE SAKE OF DETAIL AND JUST HOW CLOSELY THE READERS *REALLY* DO LOOK!

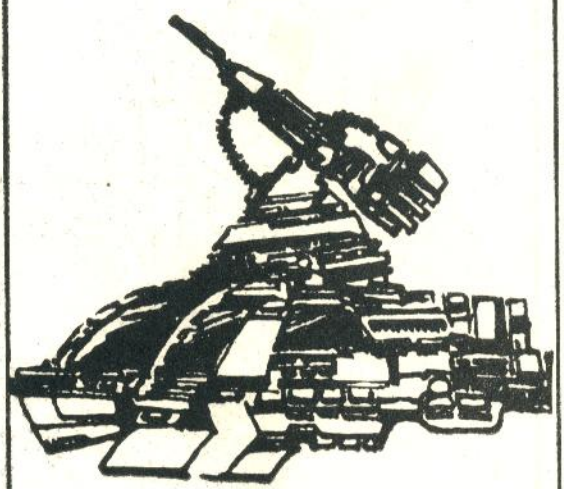
ONE OF THE "LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEMS" YOU MUST LEARN ABOUT SINCE TODAY'S COMIC INDUSTRY FORCES US TO CONCENTRATE ON THE WHOLE SPECTRUM OF SUBJECTS, IS THE GOOD OL' SPACESUIT. THE SPACESUIT IS A STRANGE AND WONDERFUL THING FOR THE ARTIST, HE CAN MAKE IT LOW KEY AND NONDETAILED, OR HE (OR SHE) CAN JUST GO CRAZY WITH IT AND HAVE SOME FUN DESIGNING SOMETHING THAT IS AS DISTINCTIVE AS THEIR OWN STYLE.

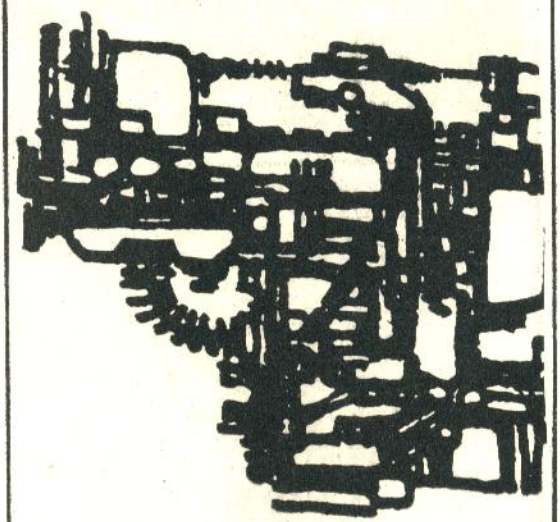


A GOOD THING TO KNOW IS THAT LIKE THE EXAGGERATED FIGURE, YOU HAVE A GOODLY AMOUNT OF FREEDOM AS TO SHOWING THE FUNCTIONALITY OF A MACHINE AND WHAT IMPACT IT HAS ON THE READER.



TECHNOLOGY IN COMICS TODAY IS NO LONGER JUST THE RAY GUN AND THE SPACESHIP FOLKS, IT'S THE LIFE OF THE FUTURE THAT INFLUENCES TECHNOLOGY IN COMICS TODAY. MANY CHARACTERS ARE LIVING IN NOW WITH THE THINGS OF TOMORROW AND THAT IS PART OF THE APPEAL OF CERTAIN BOOKS. FROM THE SLEEK AND FUNCTIONAL CARS OF TOMORROW TO THE AWESOME MACHINES OF FUTURE WAR. TO MAKE A MACHINE OF WHAT IS EXPECTED BY AN OBSERVANT READER TO BE SOMETHING FROM TOMORROW, YOU MUST BE PART DESIGNER AND PART ARTIST.





NEXT ISH! *PENS, INKS AND SOME TECHNIQUES ON WHAT THE HECK TO DO WITH THEM, AS WELL AS CHAPTERS ON THE FACE, MORE ON THE FIGURE AND STORYTELLING!*

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